Appendix 16
Transporting Children and Young People

GUIDELINES ON TRANSPORTING A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

The Irish FA recognises that the majority of adults involved in football activities have a genuine desire to contribute to the development of children and young people, but others may use it as a means of gaining access to children and young people for inappropriate reasons.

The issue of transporting children and young people has become a very sensitive issue for adults engaging in regulated activity, as it has the potential to place both parties in a vulnerable situation.

The Association also recognises that adults who engage in regulated activity are also vulnerable to false accusations made by children and young people, though these are rare. Adherence to the guidelines outlined below will reduce the risk of children and young people being harmed and will protect staff members and volunteers from potential false accusations.

When travelling to away fixtures and tournaments, best practice is to ensure that staff, volunteers, children and young people travel together in a shared road coach provided by the Association. Should a scenario arise wherein a staff member is required to transport children and young people in private or Association vehicles, there are a number of safety measures that must be adhered to in order to minimise risks:

- Only staff members who are in possession of a valid AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure vetting check are permitted to transport children and young people during regulated Irish FA activities.

- Consent must be obtained from parents and guardians before staff transport children and young people. Parents and guardians should be informed of the person who will be transporting their child, the reasons why, and how long the journey will take.

- The head coach and / or team administrator should talk to the child or young person about the transport arrangements, to ensure they are comfortable with the plans.

- The driver must ensure that they have insurance to transport persons for business purposes.

- The driver should attempt to transport more than one child or young person in the car at all times.

- When collecting children and young people as part of an away trip / tournament itinerary, staff should travel in pairs or with more than one child or young person in the car. Where possible, a staff member should never be left alone with a child or young person in the car. If this not logistically possible, the staff member should ensure that the child or young person sits in the back seat, on the opposite side of the driver's seat.

- The person who leaves children or young people home should be alternated; this reduces the risk of any one individual always being alone with the same child or young person.

- The driver should have a point of contact and mobile phone in case they break down or encounter any other issues enroute.

- Ensure that children and young people involved in Association activities are aware of their rights, and understand that there are trusted adults in the Association to whom they can express any concerns they may have.

- Children and young people should wear seatbelts at all times.

- Booster seats should be used or provided when appropriate.

- Late collections from training sessions and away trips can present staff and volunteers with particular difficulties. The head coach should have contact numbers for parents / guardians and, if possible, be provided with an alternative contact number should this scenario arise. The Irish FA is within its right to review any child or young person's continued participation in Association programmes should their parents or guardians persistently fail to collect their child on time. Staff have a responsibility to inform parents and guardians about the consequences of late collections.

- The Irish FA recognises that, on occasion, unforeseen circumstances arise within a family, affecting timely pick-ups. Parents and guardians should have a contact number for the head coach to inform them of emergencies and possible late collections.